

we need to have this information available.

Now, another sad truth. While I have been speaking, the number of cases has gone up. While I have been speaking, another person has died in the hospital. While I have been speaking, the costs have gone up \$100,000.

Something is terribly wrong with this system. We know hospitals can clean this up. We also need to know that we need to stop wasting our health care dollars on preventable infections. Let's join together as a Nation and pass H.R. 1174.

#### REVISIONS TO THE 302(a) ALLOCATIONS AND BUDGETARY AGGREGATES ESTABLISHED BY THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEARS 2007 AND 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 207(f) of S. Con. Res. 21, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, I hereby submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD revised 302(a) allocations for the House Committee on Appropriations for fiscal years 2007 and 2008. I am also providing current law mandatory allocations for informational purposes only.

#### REVISED ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

[In millions of dollars]

	2007 <sup>1</sup>	2008
Discretionary action:		
BA .....	950,316	953,053
Outlays .....	1,029,465	1,028,398
Current Law Mandatory:		
BA .....	549,102	548,676
Outlays .....	533,495	536,972

<sup>1</sup> Includes emergencies incorporated into the Congressional Budget Office March baseline.

#### IRAQ AND U.S. SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I commanded an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 ships off Afghanistan during the war from the Indian Ocean. We were told one day to take those 30 ships into the Persian Gulf, which some thought would be the running start to the Iraqi war.

Of those 30 ships, 20 of them were not United States' ships. They were Japanese. They were Australian. They were Italian. They were Greek. There were many other ships from throughout this world. But when we entered through the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf, none of those ships came with us except the British and the Australians. At that time, I knew that this war in Iraq would be a tragic misadventure.

Two months after the war in Afghanistan commenced, I was actually on the ground in Afghanistan. I saw for a very short period of time what needed to be

done in order to bring about a successful resolution of that conflict.

After the war in Iraq was over and I left my carrier battle group, I was on the ground again for a short period again in Afghanistan and saw what had not been done, because we had diverted not just our attention but our resources, our PSYOPS forces, our special forces, our civil affairs units to Iraq. To me, Afghanistan is a poster child, as it is pre-terrorist and the Taliban have shifted into the southern provinces again and what Iraq has done to U.S. security worldwide.

So, therefore, I believe that the only strategy that we can pursue for success in Iraq is to have a date that is certain by which we will redeploy out of Iraq. We have to do this for two primary reasons.

First, a date certain changes the structure of incentives within the countries that are in that region to change the behavior. Iraqis need to step up to the plate, understanding we will not be there providing political and military cover to pursue the personal fiefdoms within the ministries of Baghdad's governments.

Also, Iran and Syria are involved destructively in this war. Once they know that we will not be there, they have an incentive to work for stability. They do not want the more than 4 million refugees that are dislocated within Iraq, and some have already filled our borders, to continue to overflow it, if we are not there to contain that instability.

Second, they do not want a proxy war between these two allied nations, Syria, Sunni and Iranian Shi'a. If we are not there, they do not want to fuel a proxy war between themselves as they support different religious factions.

But there is a second reason why we must have a date certain with sufficient time to redeploy our troops.

It took us 6 months to redeploy out of Somalia, a much smaller force. In Iraq, we have 140,000 troops and over 100,000 civilians. No one should ever try to redeploy those troops, and what is the hardest military operation to do is withdrawal, when they are most vulnerable in a short period of time.

We must have a date certain as a strategy, as the only leverage remaining to change the behavior of nations within that region to work for stability and to have our troops, those who wear the cloth of this Nation, that we sent there to have a redeployment that can be safe.

I ask this Congress to think the next time, as we must work for an end to this open-ended commitment, that we do so with sufficient time, as my bill said, by the end of December 31, but on an authorization bill, not an appropriations bill, where we again would be forced to vote, as I had to, for the safety of our troops versus the need to redeploy from Iraq, under a strategy which can leave behind an unfailed state.

To bring about greater security, an authorization bill is needed. Being in the military is a dangerous business. It has the dignity of danger. It should never be unsafe because we are forced in an appropriations bill, with a short period of time, to not provide the resources for our forces.

I therefore say that it needs to be an authorization bill with a date certain to bring about a greater security for the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### HONORING THE HOUSTON FOOD BANK ON THEIR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wonder how many of us have experienced hunger in our lives. I wonder how many recognize the number of Americans who go to bed every night hungry.

It is for this reason that I rise to salute the Houston Food Bank on its 25th anniversary and to acknowledge the 25 years that the Houston Food Bank, connected to many food banks around America, has served our community, serving nearly 500,000 hungry men, women, children and their families.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the staff, the board of directors, volunteers and friends of the Houston Food Bank that have generated this most important and especially deserving organization in our community.

Hunger is devastating, but, more importantly, hunger can kill. It can kill, because those who suffer can have low nutrition that leads, if you will, to their vulnerability to disease and, yes, ultimately death. Most Americans are not familiar with the extremes of hunger. But, yet, it faces our community, or we are faced with it every single day.

In southeast Texas alone, more than 900,000 people are food insecure, meaning they do not know where their food will come from or the next meal will come from. Many children go to school, and their only meal are the free lunches and breakfasts.

So it is with great honor and privilege that I pay tribute to the Houston

Food Bank and for the celebration that they had today on the steps of City Hall. I was delighted to be able to briefly attend, as I headed back to Washington, and I am even more privileged to be able to salute them tonight.

Might I also acknowledge the End Hunger Network, whose programs remove the barriers, lack of transportation, marketing and experience, that prevent Houston from using available food resources. They are a very able partner to the Houston Food Bank.

But let me acknowledge again that this organization that acknowledges the fact that nearly 900,000 individuals in southeast Texas are food insecure and this very organization that on a given day in the greater Houston area, where more than 33,000 people suffer from hunger, the Houston Food Bank feeds more than 80,000 people each week, because they are very much aware of the struggles that people who cannot feed themselves or provide for themselves engage in.

This organization was first developed in the mid-1960s by retired businessman John van Engel, using surplus crops from local farmers. The Houston Food Bank first opened on March 8, 1982, operating from a donated storefront in a local shopping center.

That organization now is on the 59 North freeway in the 18th Congressional District, which is my congressional district. During its first year alone, the organization was able to distribute 1 million pounds of food to hungry families in the Houston area. By 1984, the Houston Food Bank had joined the Second Harvest Network, an organization formed in the mid-1970s, to set up food banks throughout the country. This is part of a national commitment and a national passion, a national avocation.

I believe that we should, in our lifetime, stamp out hunger. By the end of 1984, the Houston Food Bank was handling more than 3 million pounds of food. Since that time, the Houston Food Bank has continued to exponentially expand its operations, moving to a new permanent home and reaching more and more needy citizens, again located in the 18th Congressional District.

My community has also been represented in the past by the Honorable Mickey Leland. The Houston Food Bank is a tribute to him. Mickey Leland lost his life on the side of an Ethiopian mountain trying to deliver food to the starving Ethiopians in the 1980s.

Today around the world, people are hungry, and here in the United States they remain hungry. One in four children in Houston lives at or below the poverty level. On any given day, as I said earlier, 33,000 gulf coast residents are hungry. But we are grateful for the Houston Food Bank for its 38 million pounds of food distribution last year, the 80,000 people fed each week, nearly 400 hunger programs that are supported

by the food bank in 18 southeast Texas counties, church food pantries, homeless shelters, safe havens for the battered and abused, nutrition sites for children and the elderly, more than 100,000 volunteer hours contributed annually, and 73,000 square foot central warehouse and other space truck fleet. We can be assured of the fact that the Houston Food Bank is on the front lines of the war against hunger. It is my privilege to pay tribute to them today for 25 years of selfless, hard work of the volunteers and the leadership of their organization.

Might I acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, as I close that they also serve the Kids Cafe, the Backpack Buddy Club, Operation Frontline, Community Kitchen Culinary Academy, and today Kroger food store gave \$100,000 to the Houston Food Bank.

Keep the fight up for another 25 years for together we will stamp out hunger.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to the Houston Food Bank, on the occasion of their 25th anniversary. For the past 25 years, the Houston Food Bank has been serving our community, feeding nearly 500,000 hungry men, women, and children. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and friends of the Houston Food Bank for all their courageous work, and commend them for making a positive difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the Houston area.

Hunger is a devastating condition that plagues communities in America, as well as nations throughout the world. We have all experienced the symptoms of temporary hunger, and we know all too well the lethargy, weakness, and inability to concentrate that hunger pains can cause. Even with this knowledge, it is difficult to imagine living with these symptoms daily, always wondering where the next bit of nourishment will come from. It is unthinkable to fathom the plight of parents, forced to choose between feeding their children and paying to heat their homes. It is nearly impossible to envision the prospect of facing the world with a perpetually empty stomach.

And yet, this is a scenario that is all too real for hundreds of thousands of Americans. In southeast Texas alone, more than 900,000 people are "food insecure," or they do not know where their next meal will come from. Nationwide, the statistics are just as staggering, with one in 100 households experiencing hunger, and 11.9% of families nationwide suffering from food insecurity.

Particularly vulnerable are children. In southeast Texas, 44% of those hungry are under 18 years old, while nationally one in every five children does not know where their next meal will be found. These children suffer particularly in the summer, when schools are closed. Mr. Speaker, our children should be concerned about their grades in school; they should spend their days studying, dreaming up and planning future careers, engaging in athletic activities, and socializing with their friends. They should not be expected to worry about food; they should not have to wonder where they might find proper nourishment.

Into this bleak situation come organizations like the Houston Food Bank. Food banks were

first developed in the mid-1960s by retired businessman John van Engel, using surplus crops from local farmers. The Houston Food Bank first opened on March 8, 1982, operating from a donated store-front in a local shopping center. During its first year alone, the organization was able to distribute 1,000,000 pounds of food to hungry families in the Houston area.

By 1984, the Houston Food Bank had joined the Second Harvest Network, an organization formed in the mid-1970s to set up food banks throughout the country. By the end of 1984, the Houston Food Bank was handling more than 3,000,000 pounds of food. Since that time, the Houston Food Bank has continued to exponentially expand its operations, moving to a new permanent home and reaching more and more needy citizens.

Today, the Houston Food Bank distributes 38 million pounds of food each year to nearly 400 hunger agencies in 18 counties in southeast Texas. This food reaches 80,000 different people each week, and about 498,000 people a year. These numbers are absolutely staggering. That's nearly 500,000 grateful men, women, and children, who, thanks to the tireless efforts of the staff, volunteers, and supporters of the Houston Food Bank are granted some security in their uncertain worlds.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly proud to mention the Houston Food Bank's programs for children. Of the 80,000 individuals that the food bank feeds each week, about 44% are children. Children who are hungry cannot concentrate in school; they will not have the energy to play sports or enjoy other activities with their peers. They are also more prone to illnesses and other health issues. With these unfortunate facts in mind, the Houston Food Bank has developed the Kid's Café program, one of the nation's largest nutrition education programs, providing children with the nourishment they may not get at home. Through the collaboration of local chefs, dietitians, students and volunteers, Kid's Café is able to provide 500 kids each month with nutritious meals in safe surroundings. The program goes on to emphasize food safety, nutrition education, and hands-on instruction, helping to instill in these children the skills and knowledge they need to create healthy lifestyles.

The Houston Food Bank also touches the lives of needy children through the Backpack Buddy Club. Because many hungry children receive meager or no meals on weekends, the Houston Food Bank has implemented a program to give children backpacks, filled with food that is child-friendly, nonperishable, easily consumed and vitamin fortified, every Friday in participating schools. This program ensures that local children can receive proper nutrition even on days that they are not in the classroom.

In addition to these two programs, the Houston Food Bank operates a number of other initiatives designed to provide nutrition education, outreach, and job training to the local community. These programs are crucial to the development of positive nutrition habits, and they speak to the very real long-term needs of the community.

The Houston Food Bank has also proven its leadership in disaster relief, successfully accommodating the sharp increases in demand following the catastrophic Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Since September 2005, volunteers

traveling from as far away as Hawaii have distributed nearly 9 million pounds of food in disaster relief. The Houston Food Bank successfully provided relief to hurricane evacuees displaced from their homes, their belongings, and their livelihoods. Organizations like the Houston Food Bank have been a crucial aspect of ensuring that hurricane victims have felt welcome and well-treated in Houston.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Brian Greene, the President and CEO of the Houston Food Bank, together with the Board of Directors, the staff, the many dedicated volunteers, and all other supporters of the Houston Food Bank. These individuals are making a profound impact in their local community, and they are changing the worlds of thousands of hungry children. I thank you for your service to our community and your compassion to your fellow humans, and I wish you every success in future endeavors.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DONNELLY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MACK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MACK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### IMMIGRANT SOLDIERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I stand here today to honor the contribution of immigrants that have been made to our Nation, particularly defending our Nation in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

We need effective legislation that strikes the right balance between national security and reforming our current immigration system. This should include a path to permanency for millions of law abiding and tax paying immigrants who call the United States their home.

It's my hope that the Senate finalizes debating their immigration reform bill, and that our Chamber continues to work to adopt legislation that will truly reform the system and enhance our Nation's security.

Immigrant families are an important part of our social fabric and our economy. Undocumented workers, you may not know, contribute as much as \$7 billion a year in Social Security into our system and \$1.5 billion in Medicare every year, yet do not collect those benefits.

Immigrants, you may know, play an important role in defending our Nation. In all of our wars throughout our

history, immigrants have fought side by side and have given their lives to defending America's freedoms and ideals.

Twenty percent of the recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest honor that our Nation bestows on our war heroes, has been granted to sons and daughters of immigrants. Their bravery is proof that immigrants are as willing as any other Americans to defend our country's freedom, and their service is no less important and valuable because of their immigrant status.

For example, as of May 2006, 33,449 noncitizens served in our Armed Forces, and more than 26,000 servicemembers have become U.S. citizens since the Iraq war began, and 75 servicemembers received posthumous citizenship.

Immigrants make up 5 percent of all enlisted personnel on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, and immigrants continue to demonstrate that they are a part of this country through their service in the military.

Without the contribution of immigrants the military, as we know it today, could not meet its own recruiting goals. Without the assistance of immigrants, the military could not fill the need for foreign language translators, interpreters and cultural experts.

Immigrants provide unique incredibly valuable contributions to the military, and it's critical that we continue to recognize and appreciate their efforts and that of their families.

In the district I represent in California, we've unfortunately suffered several casualties, including that of immigrant servicemembers who gave their lives for our country. One is the fallen Marine Lance Corporal Francisco Martinez Flores who died while serving overseas in Iraq. At the age of 21, and only 2 weeks away from gaining U.S. citizenship, Francisco was killed in the line of duty. He was one of thousands of lawful permanent residents who have volunteered their service to protect the United States by joining the U.S. military.

On April 2003, Francisco was granted posthumous U.S. citizenship and Congress honored his memory by passing a bill that I authored to celebrate his life in the City of Duarte by naming a Post Office after him.

But in 2003, Sergeant Atanacio Haro-Marín, from the City of Baldwin Park, from my district from California also died in Iraq. He came under heavy enemy fire. This young man was born in Zacatecas, Mexico and moved to Los Angeles at 2 years of age. He'll be remembered as a proud and courageous soldier who was living out a long held dream of serving in the U.S. military and will be honored by having a Post Office named after him in the City of Baldwin Park.

The sacrifices that my constituents made inspired me to pursue legislation to help other legal permanent residents who risk their lives every day and die

protecting our country's liberties and values, achieve the dream of becoming a citizen.

And in 2003, I introduced the Naturalization and Family Protection for Military Members Act. The bill, which was included in the Department of Defense Authorization Conference Report, was signed into law, and recognizes the enormous contributions of immigrants in the military by providing them with easier access to naturalization and immediate family immigration protections for those killed in action.

It is a tribute to them and their families and all veterans for the enormous sacrifices they've made so we and others around the world can live in freedom.

I'm proud today to tell you that I support our military men and women, and especially those that continue to serve us that are legal permanent residents. We need to see an immigration reform program come forward that is comprehensive, and salute soldiers such as this who have given their ultimate sacrifice for our country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening, as I do most Tuesday evenings, on behalf of the 43-member strong, fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. Some people may say, what's the Blue Dog Coalition and what's it all about?

Well, Mr. Speaker, we're a group of fiscally conservative Democrats that are trying to restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our Nation's government. We're a group of conservative Democrats that were founded back in 1994 after the Republicans took control of the Congress. And at the time, it was a group that felt like they were being choked blue by the extremes of both parties. And today, we believe that we are in the middle, which is where we believe the majority of the people in America are.

We talk a lot about fiscal discipline. We talk a lot about accountability, because it is important, Mr. Speaker, that this Congress and this administration is responsible and accountable for how your tax money is being spent.

As you walk the halls of Congress, it is not difficult to know when you're walking by the office of a fellow Blue Dog Member, a fellow fiscally conservative, common-sense Democrat, because you will see this poster that says